



M E D I A R E L E A S E
STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

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CONTACT: Tom Womack, Agriculture
615-837-5118
Tom.Womack@TN.gov

Tisha Calabrese-Benton, TDEC
865-594-5442
Tisha.Calabrese@TN.gov

State Takes Next Steps to Restore Pinson Archeological Site
- Pine Orchards Scheduled for Removal -

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee departments of Agriculture and Environment and Conservation are taking steps in a long-term effort to help restore remaining portions of Pinson Mounds, a Native American archeological site.

As part of an agreement between the agencies, the Agriculture Department's Division of Forestry will begin removing aging pine trees in October from three orchard sites totaling nearly 35 acres. The pine trees were once used to provide genetically superior seed for Forestry's tree improvement program, which is being phased out at the site.

"These orchards have served their purpose and need to be removed to preserve the genetic integrity of our remaining seed orchards," said Division of Forestry reforestation unit leader John Conn. "Removing these orchards also serves the greater purpose of returning this property to an archeological site, which we're committed to doing with as little disturbance of the area as possible and in consultation with park and archeological officials."

In 2006, the two agencies made an agreement to transfer 177 acres formerly under Forestry management to Environment and Conservation's Tennessee State Parks to expand the existing Pinson Mounds State Archeological Park. The plan calls for the eventual relocation of forest tree seed production and genetic testing areas by Forestry to another site in West Tennessee. Forestry discontinued the growing and harvesting of tree seedlings at Pinson several years ago and has removed structures that were located near the Ozier mound.

"Pinson Mounds is an important key to the past and we're pleased to work cooperatively with the Division of Forestry for further protection of this archaeological gem," said Jack Gilpin, Resource Manager for Tennessee State Parks. "Once the trees are carefully removed, the area will be reseeded with native grasses and restored to a prairie state."

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ELLINGTON AGRICULTURAL CENTER
BOX 40627, NASHVILLE, TN 37204
Tennessee.gov/agriculture

Pinson Mounds, one of two state archaeological parks, is set aside to protect the prehistoric remains found there. Managed by Tennessee State Parks, the site consists of at least 15 earthen mounds and related earthworks. The site is also a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Forestry and Tennessee State Parks officials are working together to ensure that the integrity of the archeological site is protected during the harvesting process. Officials plan to complete the operations before wet weather arrives in late fall and early winter in order to minimize disturbance of the soil. The work will be performed by a yet to be named independent contractor under careful supervision by state foresters. Forestry also plans to conduct limited harvesting in another 43-acre pine tree orchard on the property.

The Division of Forestry has operated its tree improvement program at Pinson Mounds since the late 1940s to provide landowners with genetically superior hardwood and softwood seedlings for reforestation and conservation purposes. Forestry has an option to purchase another piece of property in West Tennessee and expects to begin relocating its tree improvement program next year.

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